

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 01693 01 OF 02 241818Z

53

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

PC-01 EB-07 COME-00 FEAE-00 FPC-01 INT-05 SAM-01 CU-02

NIC-01 EUR-12 SCCT-01 STR-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /092 W

----- 024859

R 212154Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7210

INFO AMCONSUL CALI

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BOGOTA 1693

EO 11652:HGDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR CO

SUBJ: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA

1. THE MAJOR PUBLIC EVENT OF THE WEEK WAS PRES LOPEZ'S NINETY MINUTE ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON FEB 20. DURING THE SPEECH (SEP-TEL) THE PRES STATED THAT THERE WAS NO CRISIS IN COLOMBIA. HE REBUTTED THE ASSERTIONS OF SOME CRITICS THAT COLOMBIA WAS ENTERING AN ECONOMIC RECESSION. WITH THE AID OF NUMEROUS CHARTS, LOPEZ EXPOUNDED ON THE ECONOMY, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS HEALTHY AND GROWING. HE ANNOUNCED HIS FORTHCOMING VISITS TO PANAMA IN MARCH AND TO THE US IN THE AUTUMN. THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ALSO STATED THAT HE WOULD CALL THE CONGRESS INTO SPECIAL SESSION DURING MARCH.

2. PETROLEUM OUTLOOK. LOPEZ ACKNOWLEDGED THE NEED FOR SUBSTANTIAL IMPORTS OF PETROBMEUM DURING 1975 TO OFFSET DECLINING DOMESTIC PRODUCTION AND INCREASING CONSUMPTION. HE WAS OPTIMISTIC, HOWEVER, CONCERNING THE LONG RANGE EFFECTS OF AN (UNSPECIFIED) PRICE INCREASE AS A SPUR TO PRODUCTION AND EXPLORATION. IN THIS CONTEXT, LOPEZ STATED THAT ECOPETROL (THE GOC-OWNED ENTITY) WOULD HAVE A LARGER ROLE IN FUTURE COLOMBIAN PETROLEUM ACTIVITIES.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 01693 01 OF 02 241818Z

3. CUBA - A SLIGHT CHANGE. DURING THE DAYS PRECEDING THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, THERE HAD BEEN NUMEROUS RUMORS THAT LOPEZ WOULD ANNOUNCE THE RENEWAL OF RELATIONS WITH CUBA. ALTHOUGH HE MADE NO SUCH ANNOUNCEMENT, PRESIDENT LOPEZ DID MAKE A PASSING, BUT POSSIBLY SIGNIFICANT, REFERENCE TO CUBA. IN DISCUSSING POSSIBLE MARKETS FOR COLOMBIAN RICE, HE SAID THAT THERE MIGHT BE MARKETS FOR THAT PRODUCT "IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, IN CUBA, IN OTHER OF OUR NEIGHBORING LANDS".

4. FINANCE MINISTERS MEET. THE COLOMBIAN AND VENEZUELAN FINANCE MINISTERS MET FOR TWO DAYS IN A COLOMBIAN BORDER TOWN. AN OFFICIAL DECLARATION ISSUED BY COLOMBIAN MINISTRY RATHER BLANDLY LISTS THE BILATERAL MATTERS DISCUSSED. PRESS REPORTS, HOWEVER, STRESS SUPPOSED BROADER SIGNIFICANCE, STATING THAT COLOMBIA WILL JOIN MEXICO AND VENEZUELA IN PROMOTING A NEW LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION FROM WHICH THE US WOULD BE EXCLUDED, AND PROFESSING TO SEE A NEW COLOMBIAN-MEXICAN-VENEZUELAN AXIS EMERGING IN LATIN AFFAIRS. CLOSER COLOMBIAN-VENEZUELAN COOPERATION IS PLAUSIBLE, AND PERHAPS LIKELY, GIVEN NATURAL ATTRACTION TO COLOMBIA OF VENEZUELA'S NEW WEALTH, AND VENEZUELA'S MOVES TO EXTEND ITS INFLUENCE BEYOND ITS BORDERS. HOW ALL THIS AFFECTS COLOMBIAN-MEXICAN COOPERATION IS, SO FAR, LESS CLEAR.

5. LIBERAL PARTY ACTIVITIES. THE LIBERAL PARTY, DURING THE PAST WEEK, CONTINUED TO MANIFEST ITS CHRONIC FACTIONALISM. FORTY-TWO LIBERAL REPS AND SENATORS FROM THE ATLANTIC COAST DEPARTMENTS MEETING IN TOLU, SUCRE OVER THE WEEKEND OF FEB 14-16, PASSED TWO RESOLUTIONS, CALLING FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE GOVERNORS OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF ATLANTICO, BOLIVAR AND SUCRE, AND DENOUNCING OTHER LIBERALS INCLUDING THE PRESS FOR THEIR ATTACKS ON THE PRESENT COMPTROLLER GENERAL, JULIO ENRIQUE ESCALLON, ALSO A LIBERAL, FOR ALLEGED TRANSGRESSIONS. MOST OBSERVERS ATTRIBUTED THE ACTION AGAINST THE GOVERNORS TO BE A RESULT OF PERSONALITIES AND POLITICAL GROUPINGS. SEVERAL OF THE GOVERNORS HAVE USED THEIR OFFICES TO BUILD UP THEIR RESPECTIVE POLITICAL BASES, OFTEN AT THE EXPENSE OF THE LEGISLATORS PRESENT AT THE MEETING.

6. STUDENT DEMONSTRATION. ON SAT AFTERNOON FEB 15 A DEMONSTRATION COMMEMORATING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF CAMILO TORRES, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BOGOTA 01693 01 OF 02 241818Z

PRIEST TURNED LEFTIST GUERRILLA, AND PROTESTING GOVERNMENT INACTION AGAINST SOCIAL ILLS AND THE HIGH COST OF LIVING TOOK PLACE IN DOWNTOWN BOGOTA. THE DEMONSTRATION WAS CALLED BY A GROUPING OF LEFTIST ELEMENTS CALLING ITSELF "EL BLOQUE SOCIAL-ISTA" AND WORD OF THE DEMONSTRATION WENT OUT TO THE PUBLIC BY THE TRADITIONAL MEANS OF WALL POSTERS. EL ESPACIO, A BOGOTA TABLOID, CARRIED A LEAD STORY ON THE DAY OF THE DEMONSTRATION REPORTING THAT BOGOTA POLICE AND MILITARY POLICE CARRIED OUT

A ROUNDUP OF 677 PEOPLE BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 9 AND 1 OCLOCK OF THE PREVIOUS NIGHT FOR THE PURPOSE OF PREVENTING "ABNORMAL" INCIDENTS DURING THE SATURDAY DEMONSTRATION. IN MOST CASES INDIVIDUALS WERE DETAINED BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF PROPER DOCUMENTATION; HOWEVER, 16 PERSONS WERE FOUND TO BE ILLEGALLY CARRYING ARMS. ON SATURDAY EVENING POLICE AND MILITARY PATROLS CHECKED DOCUMENTS OF ALL PERSONS GOING AWAY FROM THE AREA OF THE DEMONSTRATION. DISCUSSIONS WITH INDIVIDUALS ON THE STREET REVEALED THAT THE DEMONSTRATION ITSELF WAS A RATHER SMALL ONE, OF APPROX 200 PEOPLE, MOST OF WHOM APPEARED TO BE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. THE PARTICIPANTS WERE HOWEVER FOLLOWED BY A LARGE NUMBER OF ONLOOKERS AS THE DEMONSTRATION WOUND THROUGH THE STREETS. ACCORDING TO OBSERVERS THE DEMONSTRATION LASTED MOST OF THE AFTERNOON BUT NO SERIOUS DISRUPTIONS OR INCIDENCE OF VIOLENCE OCCURED.

7. GUERRILLAS CLAIM FOREIGN PARTICIPANTION. "EL TIEMPO", DATED FEB 18, REPORTED THAT ARTURO VALENCIA ARBOLEDA, COLOMBIAN LAWYER RECENTLY RELEASED AFTER BEING KIDNAPPED BY INDIVIDUALS CLAIMING TO BE MEMBERS OF THE COLOMBIAN NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY (ELN), WAS TOLD BY ELN LEADERS THAT SOVIET, CZECHOSLOVAK AND CUBAN DOCTORS WERE ASSISTING THE ELN. THE EMB HAS NO EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 01693 02 OF 02 241658Z

53

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

PC-01 EB-07 COME-00 FEAE-00 FPC-01 INT-05 SAM-01 CU-02

NIC-01 EUR-12 SCCT-01 STR-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /092 W

----- 023849

R 212154Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7211

INFO AMCONSUL CALI

AMONSUL MEDELLIN 812

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BOGOTA 1693

THE STATEMENT OF THE ELN CONCERNING FOREIGN DOCTORS ASSISTING THE GUERRILLAS. ON BALANCE THE REPORT APPEARS TO BE APROPAGANDA EFFORT BY THE INSURGENT GROUP.

8. PETROLEUM PRICE AND POLICY PROBLEMS. THE GOC HAS FINALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT COLOMBIA FACES A HEAVY IMPORT BILL (PROBABLY IN EXCESS OF 80 MILLION DOLLARS) FOR PETROLEUM AND GASOLINE IN 1975, BUT GOC POLICY TO MEET SITUATION IS STILL UNCLEAR. THE MAJORITY OF THE ECOPETROL BOARD OF DIRECTORS SENT A LETTER TO PRESIDENT LOPEZ SHARPLY CRITICIZING COMPANY PRES FRANCISCO VILLAREAL AND MAINTAINING THAT DISORGANIZATION WITHIN THE COMPANY IS CONTRIBUTING TO THE ENERGY CRISIS IN COLOMBIA. VILLAREAL GAVE A PRESS INTERVIEW INDICATING IMPORT PROJECTIONS OF ABOUT 16,000 BARRELS PER DAY FOR 1975. WHILE NOT ATTEMPTING TO REFUTE CRITICISM, HE EXPRESSED OPTIMISM RE THE LONGRANGE OUTLOOK. THE PRIVATE SECTOR, HOWEVER, IS INCREASINGLY GLOOMY OVER PROSPECTS. LOPEZ'S PROPOSAL FOR INCREASED ECOPETROL PARTICIPATION IN CONCESSIONS WILL REQUIRE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS ON PAYMENT FORMULAS. ACCORDINGLY IT IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER OR NOT THE GOC WILL BE ABLE TO IMPLEMENT SOON A LONG-DELAYED REVISION OF PETROLEUM PRICE POLICIES OR THAT ANY REVISION, IF ANNOUNCED, WILL OFFER ADEQUATE STIMULUS TO EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 01693 02 OF 02 241658Z

RUMORS CONTINUE TO CIRCULATE THAT BOTH VILLAREAL AND MINISTER OF MINES DEL HIERRO WILL SOON BE REPLACED. (SEE BOGOTA 1613 AND A-13 FOR DETAILS.)

9. ARMY COMMANDER VISITS VENEZUELA. THE COMMANDER OF THE COLOMBIAN ARMY, GENERAL ALVARO VALENCIA TOVAR, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE AND PERSONAL AIDE, MAJOR JORGE TORRADO LEFT MONDAY, 17 FEB FOR VISIT TO VENEZUELA. AN INVITATION HAD BEEN EXTENDED BY THE VENEZUELAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE, GENERAL HOMERO LEON. IN AN AIRPORT INTERVIEW IN CARACAS GENERAL VALENCIA REAFFIRMED THE CONTINUED FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE TWO NATIONS AND STATED THAT RECENT BORDER INCIDENTS BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND COLOMBIA DID NOT REPRESENT ANY PROBLEM BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. IN ONE SUCH INCIDENT, REPORTED 17 FEB, A VENEZUELAN SOLDIER WAS KILLED BY CIVILIANS ON THE COLOMBIAN SIDE OF THE BORDER IN THE GUAJIRA. VENEZUELAN TROOPS IN ARMORED VEHICLES ENTERED COLOMBIA TO RECOVER HIS BODY. THEY WERE MET BY A COLOMBIAN PATROL WHICH PERMITTED THE VENEZUELAN TO COMPLETE THEIR MISSION. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE VALENCIA TOVAR VISIT WAS SCHEDULED IN ORDER TO DISPEL RUMORS THAT MIGHT ARISE FROM SUCH INCIDENTS AND TO GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF SOLIDARITY BETWEEN THE TWO ARMED FORCES. A SIMILAR SITUATION PRECEDED THE MEETING OF GENERAL VALENCIA AND THE COMMANDER OF THE VENEZUELAN ARMY IN BARRANQUILLA IN NOV 1974. VAKY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION, SPEECHES, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BOGOTA01693
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750064-1108
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750225/aaaaavyc.tel
Line Count: 221
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 SEP 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <19 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, EGEN, CO, (LOPEZ REGA, JOSE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006